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STATE FOR S/CT - WORMAN/HAWTHORNE, NEA/I - OLSON/EVANS,
EB/ESC/TSF - SALOOM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/02/2016

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CG](#) [IZ](#) [AG](#)

SUBJECT: ALGERIA ACTIVELY SEEKING TO PREVENT TRAVEL OF
FOREIGN FIGHTERS TO IRAQ

REF: A. STATE 35709

[B](#). TDX-315/11008-06

Classified By: Ambassador Richard W. Erdman,
for reasons 1.4 (b), (c) and (d)

ALGERIA A PARTNER IN SHARING INFORMATION

[1](#)1. (S/NF) The GOA is committed to preventing Algerian would-be foreign fighters from traveling to Iraq and to breaking up networks recruiting foreign fighters of various nationalities. Algeria continues to arrest persons traveling with this intent and has won U.S. Government recognition for being proactive and successful in its intelligence efforts and information sharing. Ref B provides current information from SIMO in this regard.

GOA WORKS TO RESTRICT ILLEGITIMATE TRAVEL TO IRAQ

[1](#)2. (S/NF) The GOA arrested in December and January at least ten Algerians attempting to travel to Iraq as foreign fighters. Algeria remains committed to preventing Algerians from joining the insurgency in that country. The issue in Algeria is not so much increasing vigilance against fraudulent travel documents as identifying potential foreign fighter recruits and preventing their travel. The GOA maintains tight control of its airports and can be relied to take appropriate action to prevent potential jihadist travel to Iraq.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Presidential Counselor for Counter-Terrorism Rezag Bara assured DCM and Pol/Econ Chief April 2 that Algeria continued to act on information related to the travel to Iraq of Algerian foreign fighters. Since as early as March 2003, he noted, the GOA had taken measures to discourage imams from using their sermons to incite young men to go to Iraq to wage jihad. The GOA has also put in place active measures to stem financing and support of such travel. That said, explained Rezag Bara, there were many sources on the Internet and Arabic satellite television seeking to encourage young men to go fight in Iraq, and it was not possible, as much as the GOA would like, to counter all of them.

[1](#)4. (S/NF) Another complication, Rezag Bara said, was that young Algerians who sought to travel to countries such as Syria and Saudi Arabia would offer apparently legitimate business purposes or visits to family members as the reason for their travel. Despite the GOA's efforts to prevent illegitimate travel, it was not uncommon for Algerians arriving in a third country on ostensibly legitimate reasons to enter Iraq. Rezag Bara made clear that the GOA was well aware that thousands of Algerians had traveled to Afghanistan

and Pakistan in the 1980s to fight the Soviets, and had then returned to Algeria, where they became the footsoldiers of the terrorist groups in the 1990s. Algeria was committed to avoiding a repeat of that experience.

ALGERIA WANTS A SOVEREIGN AND SECURE IRAQ

15. (S/NF) Reviewing Algeria's Iraq policy, Rezag Bara noted that Algeria sought a united, sovereign, stable Iraq, which could not be achieved in the midst of suicide bombings and chaos. Only the formation of a united Iraqi government would create conditions in which U.S. troops would leave Iraq. DCM stressed U.S. support for the immediate formation of a broadly representative Iraqi government enjoying popular support and credibility as a key element to restoring Iraq's stability. Rezag Bara observed that Algeria had established full diplomatic relations with Iraq and had seen two of its diplomats on assignment to Baghdad kidnapped and killed. In response to DCM's remark that only a small percentage of foreign fighters in Iraq appeared to be Algerians, Rezag Bara said there were reports that when some young Algerians went to Iraq to fight in 2003, they returned home after learning that Zarqawi wanted them to become suicide bombers and to kill Iraqis instead of "infidels." Regrettably, he said, some Algerian youth would continue to be susceptible to jihadist recruitment efforts, but Algeria was committed to working for a solution that would reinforce the sovereignty and credibility of the Iraqi Government.

ERDMAN